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1.01 PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES

Medical research programs support and enhance the patient care mission of VA health care facilities by:

- a. Providing resources to acquire new knowledge leading to improvements in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of diseases and disabilities.
- b. Encouraging directed cooperative research programs by using the unique capabilities of VA system of medical centers to study appropriate health problems.
- c. Contributing to a professionally attractive environment that favors the recruitment, retention and professional growth of high quality patient care staff.
- d. Developing research careers to provide a nucleus of physicians who are capable of conducting meaningful research across the entire spectrum from basic science to clinical application of new knowledge.

1.02 POLICIES

- a. VA medical research programs are chiefly investigator-initiated. Projects and programs are primarily clinically oriented and reflect the interests of VA professional staff and usually arise from the clinical experiences of the investigators. Cooperative Studies and certain Special Programs involve centrally administered research.
- b. VA Central Office is responsible for policy development, peer review of all proposed research studies, budget formulation, and distribution of research funds. Administration of investigator-initiated medical research programs are decentralized to the health care facilities to allow maximum local participation in decision-making. The scientific merit of programs is evaluated by both local and national peer review, although local considerations may require adjustment of central resource allocation decisions to serve the needs of facilities and investigators and help maintain a program balance that supports the total mission of VA health care facility.
- c. Medical Research Service funds only intramural medical research conducted by staff members of VA health care facilities. Scientific peer review provides VA Central Office with a fair and objective evaluation of all investigator-initiated research programs. Investigators are eligible for medical research support only if they have established a significant role in the health care facility. A determination of eligibility for Medical Research funding must be made by VA Central Office for each investigator who receives less than 5/8 VA salary support.
- d. Funds are provided by VA Central Office to the health care facility in relation to specific research programs approved for support by VA Central Office review committees. The local R&D (Research and Development) Committee may recommend to the medical center Director some redistribution of these funds based on local considerations. In addition to supporting the research programs of investigators, some VA Central Office funds are distributed to each facility for purposes of establishing and maintaining an administrative office, animal research facilities, and common resources shared by investigators.